Walworth County deer farmer penalized for violating quarantines

Release Date: August 20, 2015

Contact: Raechelle Cline, 608-224-5005
Bill Cosh, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON -- A Walworth County farm-raised deer keeper agreed to a civil forfeiture for violating quarantines imposed to manage the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD). The quarantines were issued in February 2007 and September 2008, the State Veterinarian's office said today.

In a plea agreement, Dana Montana, owner of Lake Geneva Animal Gardens, agreed to a settlement without further litigation. Montana has agreed to pay a total of $8,000 to Walworth County Circuit Court including court costs and fees by December 31, 2015.

"Animal disease control is a priority for this department so the rules exist for a good reason," said State Veterinarian Dr. Paul McGraw. "We impose quarantines to ensure that diseases like CWD do not spread."

Quarantine of animals and animal products is one of the most important Department orders to protect animal and public health. Similar quarantines were imposed during the recent avian influenza outbreak that led to the destruction of nearly two million chickens and turkeys in Wisconsin. Without the quarantines, many more birds may have had to be destroyed due to infection.

The quarantines explicitly forbid the owner from moving deer from her property without prior written permission from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. An inspection of records and further investigation identified the violation that led to the charges.

"Our animal health laws are in place to protect animal health and the industry," McGraw said. "In general, the farm-raised deer industry has been compliant with quarantines, which helps to protect other farms and wild deer from the spread of CWD. When a farm fails to follow the law, we take it seriously."

Connect with us on Twitter at twitter.com/widatcp or Facebook at facebook.com/widatcp.

# # #